

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

22nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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HINCHEY SECURES \$900,000 FOR PROTECTION OF CAYUGA LAKE AND UPPER CATATONK CREEK

ITHACA - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today announced that funding for watershed protection he placed in appropriations bills for fiscal year 2003 is included in the omnibus spending bill that passed the House on Thursday. Hinchey secured \$450,000 for a study of the Upper Susquehanna River Basin, including work on the Catatonk Creek Initiative. He obtained an equal amount for a project to protect Cayuga Lake.

"Both of these watersheds are valuable resources that are now endangered," said Hinchey. "It is imperative that we take the necessary steps to protect them and to find long-term solutions to recurring problems."

Catatonk Creek is one of several watersheds in Tioga County that has been adversely affected by flooding and stream bank erosion. There has been great local interest in developing sustainable solutions. The funding for this project will be used for a study and construction of demonstration wetlands to address flooding issues on a watershed basis. Many facets of this project are transferable to other watersheds in the Susquehanna River Basin where similar problems are occurring.

The Cayuga Lake Watershed is the largest of all the Finger Lakes. Fifty-nine percent of the watershed's total acreage lies in Tompkins County. It is vulnerable to contamination from run-off as 34 percent of land use in the watershed is agriculture-related. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation lists the lake and many of its tributaries as threatened for water supply on its priority list. Other tributaries are threatened for fish propagation and habitat. Cayuga Lake is also on the national list of impaired bodies in need of remediation. The earmarked funds will be used to implement Best Management Practices, both agricultural and non-agricultural, that have been identified in the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan.